Enhancements to Labels and Text

Often how we enter data into the attribute table is not the way we wish it to display as a label.

We can uniformly change the display with symbol properties, but what happens when you want to modify only one or a few labels to make them stand out.

Labels and map text use symbol settings for their font display properties.

The symbol settings are referred to as the base settings.

You can override the base settings with formatting tags and enhance labels by writing simple VB expressions in the Label Properties dialog.

In this image the table shows the values of the parcel field used for labeling.

Above the table we see an enhanced label where Parcel No: text was added and the label italicized.

We also see a modified annotation label with just a portion of the label bolded.

Generally it's taught when you turn on a layer's labels you are unable to manipulate them individually unless you convert them to an annotation class.

Like most things with ESRI software there are usually two or more ways to get around a general rule.

Let's start manipulating the labels by adding the text Parcel No: to all labels and then italicizing the labels.

Right-click on the layer and at the bottom of the menu choose properties.

The layer properties dialog will appear.

Make sure the labels tab is selected.

In the Label Field select the target field from the table.

In this case Parcel_ID.

Next click the Expression button.

The label Expression dialog will appear.

The top window pane displays the fields in the table.

The Expression window pane is where we'll create our VB expressions.

Before Parcel_ID add Parcel No: within quotes.

To connect objects you need to add an ampersand.

To maintain a space between the colon and the parcel number you must put a space in quotes.

In this example I'll place two spaces.

Add another ampersand.

Within the next set of quotes add a less than sign then ita and then a greater than sign.

This indicates where the italicized labeling starts.

Now go to the end of the field name and in quotes do the same thing except add a forward slash between the less than and the letter I.

This indicates where the italicizing stops.

The ita on both sides of the label field must be identical in their font.

Click the verify button to determine if your code is functioning.

The Label Expression Verification dialog will pop up.

The sample window pane gives a preview of what the labels will look like.

Click ok on all the open dialogs to return to the map document.

In the next segment we will add some formatting tags to one of the annotation labels.

The labels were already converted to annotation.

Double-click on the center parcel label to open the properties dialog.

We only want to bold the last six numbers of the label.

Click on About Formatting Text button.

This dialog shows many basic tags that can be used to modify labels.

These tags can be used almost anywhere text is placed on or around the map.

They can be used with dynamic label expressions, annotation, legend text, map titles, and even in values with a field of a table.

Close the About Formatting Tags window.

Place the cursor where you want the formatting change to begin.

Type <bol>

Type </bol> where the formatting change ends.

Click OK

More than one formatting tag can be added to text.

Open the properties again to italicize the whole label.

At the beginning of the label type in <ita> and at the end add </ita>.

Click OK.